

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report

Vacation 1403

Date: June 2, 2003

Applicant: Minneapolis Public Schools

60-Day Review Decision Date: Not Applicable

Address of Property: 31st Street East between 19th Avenue South and 21st Avenue South

Contact Person and Phone: David Richards 612-668-0287

Planning Staff and Phone: Jim Voll 612-673-3887

Ward: 9 **Neighborhood Organization:** Corcoran Neighborhood Association

Existing Zoning: The surrounding area is predominantly zoned R2B Two-family residential.

Comprehensive Plan: The land use plan of the comprehensive plan shows the area as mainly residential with commercial on Lake Street to the north.

Proposed Use: Parking.

Background: This item was postponed from the march 31, 2003 meeting of the City Planning Commission to allow the applicant to discuss the proposal with the neighborhood group. The School District proposes to vacate 31st Street East between 19th and 21st Avenues to utilize the space as parking and to reduce traffic hazards around South High School.

Development Plan: A proposed parking layout is attached to this report.

Other Zoning Applications Required: A conditional use permit to allow a parking lot is required.

Responses from Utilities and Affected Property Owners: Minneapolis Public Works Department recommends denial of the request since 31st Street is a well traveled route and is a Municipal State Aid (MSA) route. The Minneapolis Fire Department does not oppose the vacation on the condition that the street will be accessible for the department to meet the uniform fire code.

Xcel Energy requests an easement over the south 10 feet of the vacated right-of-way.

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Findings: The Public Works Department and City Planning Department find that the area proposed for vacation is needed for public purpose, and is part of a public transportation corridor, and that it can not be vacated. *The Minneapolis Plan* states the following about the street grid:

“The residential street grid laid onto the city from its earliest days has provided yet another powerful organizing force for our neighborhoods. Since the first residents claimed title to land along the Mississippi in the 1850s, the street grid has exerted a great deal of influence over land subdivision. The grid is a primary organizing element, easily understood and navigable by all, whether a neighborhood is familiar or foreign to the traveler. Freeway construction removed blocks of housing and series of neighborhood streets, forever altering how neighbors interact, do their shopping, or stroll through their neighborhoods. Maintaining the grid pattern of our streets and "healing" it by re-establishing connections wherever possible is a strong prerogative for the continued vitality of city neighborhoods. In cases where street closures have been approved for the sake of development, attention should be focused on creative and livable solutions to reopening these thoroughfares. Being able to find one's way through unfamiliar territory brings tremendous benefit to the urban landscape. Whenever possible, new development should correspond to the historical street grid pattern.”

9.13 Minneapolis will restore and maintain the traditional street grid.

Implementation Steps

Maintain the street grid as the preferred option while evaluating new development of potential street changes.

Restore the street grid whenever possible.

Restore the historic connectivity of street corridors by working with property owners and city agencies on reopening streets such as Nicollet at Lake.

Pursue the reclamation of air rights above freeways so that through the use of land bridges, neighborhoods can be reconnected and land can be used more productively.

The vacation of this portion of 31st is not in conformance with this policy of the comprehensive plan.

The *Corcoran Midtown Revival* plan was adopted by the City Council on October 11, 2002. The plan advocates the creation of “plaza streets”. The plan states that plaza streets “create a street environment that is more like a public plaza and maintains the ability for through traffic while calming traffic and allowing for more uses than just a street. Locations suggested for plaza streets in the neighborhood include 31st Street between South High and the athletic field....” The proposed vacation does not conform to the goal of creating a pedestrian friendly through street.

Recommendation of the City Planning Department:

The City Planning Department recommends that the City Planning Commission and the City Council accept the above findings and **deny** the vacation of 31st Street East between 19th Avenue south and 21st Avenue South.

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Schiff

Vacating * (Vacation File No. #####).**

Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That all that part **** is hereby vacated except that such vacation shall not affect the existing easement right and authority of *****, their successors and assigns, to enter upon that portion of the aforescribed ***** which is described in regard to ****each of *****said corporation(s) as follows, to wit:

As to*****:

As to*****:

***Delete (NOTE: If the City has easements use last two paragraphs, if no City easement, just utilities, use the following paragraph.)

to operate, maintain, repair, alter, inspect or remove its above-described utility facilities and said easement right and authority is hereby expressly reserved to each of the above-named corporations, and no other person or corporation shall have the right to fill, excavate, erect buildings or other structures, plant trees or perform any act which would interfere with or obstruct access to said ***** upon or within the above-described areas without first obtaining the written approval of the corporation(s) having utility facilities located within the area involved authorizing them to do so.

to operate, maintain, repair, alter, inspect or remove its above-described utility facilities and said easement right and authority is hereby expressly reserved to each of the above-named corporations and the City of Minneapolis, and no other person or corporation shall have the right to fill, excavate, erect buildings or other structures, plant trees or perform any act which would interfere with or obstruct access to said ***** upon or within the above-described areas without first obtaining the written approval of the corporations and the Director of Public Works of the City of Minneapolis having utility facilities located within the area involved authorizing them to do so.

Where the area described above in regard to any of the other corporations, or any part thereof lies within the area described above in regard to the City of Minneapolis, the rights reserved to the other corporation or corporations shall be subordinate to the rights reserved to the City of Minneapolis to the same extent that said rights would be subordinate if this ***** had not been vacated.